

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please amend Fig. 7a as illustrated on the marked-up version of Fig. 7a enclosed herewith. A replacement drawings sheet is also provided.

REMARKS

In response to the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action dated May 31, 2006, Applicants have elected Species I and have identified claims 1-4, 8, 10, 12-14 and 18 as reading thereon. In addition, Applicants also submit an amendment in which claims 1, 3, 4, 10, 13 and 14 have been amended. Fig. 7(a) has been amended to correct an inadvertent error in the original drawing. It is also noted that claims 5, 9, 11 and 15 have been amended and withdrawn. As these withdrawn claims depend from claim 1, it will be requested that the claims be rejoined if claim 1 is determined to be allowable. No new matter has been added.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Klimowicz for the personal interview conducted on June 7, 2006. The following represents a summary of the substance of the interview, including arguments which were presented for distinguishing each of the pending independent claims over the cited prior art.

According to an embodiment of the present invention as shown in Figs. 1 and 3, a chassis (8) is provided with a protruding portion (8a) in an area around a support column (7), wherein the height of the protruding portion (8a) is greater than the height of a stator-side bearing member (6). By providing such an arrangement, a fluid such as a hydrodynamic lubricant contained in the bearing space between the underside of the rotor-side bearing member (3) and the upper side of the stator-side bearing member (6) is prevented from being dispersed outside of the rotor hub (2) and onto the disk (15) (*see, e.g.*, Figs. 1 and 3 and paragraphs [0034] and [0035]).

It is submitted that the foregoing features are recited by each of independent claims 1 and 10. Moreover, at a minimum, neither Hisabe (EP 0 392 500) nor Goto 9USP

No. 6,371,650) taken alone or in combination with one another disclose these features.

More specifically, the foregoing prior art, at a minimum, fails to disclose or suggest a chassis having a protruding portion in an area around a support column, wherein the height of the protruding portion is greater than the height of a stator-side bearing member, as recited in each pending independent claims.

For example, as shown in Fig. 9 of Hisabe, in connection with the spindle motor, there is a possibility that a fluid (i.e., lubrication oil) existing within the gap between the moveable piece 3a and the fixed piece 3b constituting the thrust bearing could be dispersed to the disk via unoccupied space adjacent to the rotor.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is respectfully submitted that it is clear that the foregoing prior art references do not render the present invention, as recited by the pending claims, unpatentable. Accordingly, it is submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited.

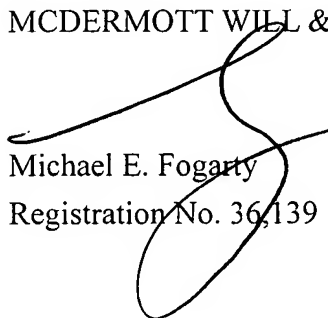
If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of

this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Fig. 7 (a)

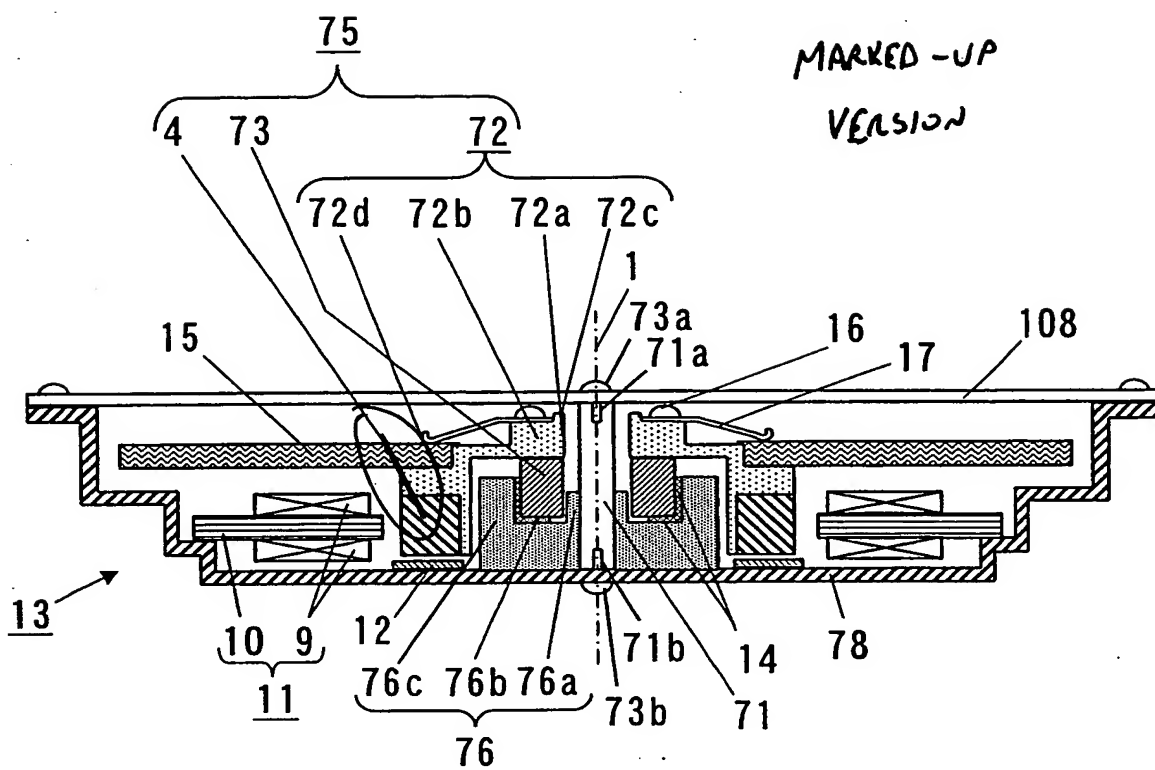


Fig. 7 (b)

